

## case study

# Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board

## Launch of a new regulatory body

The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) was set up in 2003 to develop, improve and promote postgraduate medical education and training (PMET) in the United Kingdom.

Athene was commissioned to develop and implement a strategy to engage proactively and regularly, with targeted key audiences in the run-up to going live in October 2004.

A key issue was how to communicate sensitively with a variety of audiences, some of whom felt let down by the previous regime, whilst others felt potentially threatened by the development of new structures and practices.

The unexpected resignation of PMETB's first chair and chief executive and the postponement of the go-live date meant, in fact, that much of Athene's initial work focused on crisis management and media response.

With the appointment of a new chief executive, a new strategy was required to meet the following objectives:

- To generate confidence that PMETB would go live.
- To demonstrate the Board had not forgotten its remit for change.
- To show the benefits that PMETB would bring
- To engage with stakeholders and show that PMETB was listening to their views.

### Athene's approach

Athene recommended four main areas of activity:

- Information flow – a steady flow of information about PMETB's progress, communicated directly through an electronic update and a new website, both developed and managed by Athene.
- Media relations – an 'as and when' approach to the media, when PMETB had something to say.
- Stakeholder engagement through a series of 'listening events' and the launch of a 'delivering excellence' consultation.
- Speaking events and stands at conferences.

These recommendations were welcomed and endorsed by the Board.

A key element of the strategy was the launch of the Delivering Excellence consultation. This comprised three main elements:

- 1 A series of listening groups held around the country combining short presentations on PMETB's current work, with sessions on what the future of postgraduate training should look like.
- 2 An online consultation inviting key stakeholders to submit their views on what excellence in PMET might look like.
- 3 A 'Delivering Excellence' seminar held in October 2005, marking both PMETB's 'go-live' (the pragmatic achievement) and considering the results of the consultation (the visionary element).

### Results

PMETB was set up to address sensitive issues. Understandably it attracted considerable and often critical media coverage, particularly following the resignations of its chairman and chief executive and the postponement of its go-live date.

Athene's approach allowed PMETB to reach out to its key stakeholders directly, thus by-passing the trade press and getting across the facts, rather than the myths, about PMETB's agenda. Over 2,000 people were receiving the monthly e-update by August 2005.

In addition the Delivering Excellence consultation and PMETB's presence at conferences allowed the organisation to engage directly with its audiences, both in order to explain key issues and to listen to the expectations of different sectors of the healthcare profession.

The on-line consultation provided a wealth of evidence about what people were looking for as PMETB develops a new regime. This was distilled and used to inform the development of PMETB's post go-live strategy.